659 [805] **113. Accuracy of the Age-return.**—Of all the questions asked for the purpose of filling in the Census Schedules, that pertaining to age is generally attended with dubious results. The ordinary villager who has received practically no education is not only ignorant of his actual age but on account of traditional reticence he would not give away his correct age to any outsider even if he knew it. There is a tendency to declare a higher age than he has actually reached. The timely issue of printed circulars and verbal instructions to the Census agency enjoining upon them the necessity of exercising a strict and careful check on the entries of age column went a long way in securing a reliable return of age but still the mistakes which are inherent to this enquiry may have played their part though to a smaller extent. It is accordingly not possible to assert that the returns of age have reached the ideal accuracy which must needs elude the grasp of many a Census till the percentage of literacy of the rural population is considerably increased and the wholesome effects of widespread education and enlightenment have broken the weakening cords of superstition and traditional reticence of the masses who at present do not fully realise the value of the Census statistics. The principal causes responsible for inaccuracy of the age-return have already received sufficient comment in the previous Census Reports but to enable the reader to correctly appraise the figures it is essential to review them briefly here also.

802 1. An average person shows a special preference for stating his age in numbers which end in zero or which are multiples of 5 and it is rare that he states the intervening numbers unless he is challenged or persistently interrogated. There is a further preference for even over odd numbers.

2. No accute distinction is made in their minds by people in giving the ages of children; and children from two months upto two years or over may be inadvertently clubbed together in the category of 0-1 age-period.

581 3. Amongst the Hindu parents there is a strong proclivity to understate the age of unmarried girls for fear of social obloquy, while on the other hand there is some overstatement in the ages of young boys who are pushed into premature manhood.

4. In middle-life, the understatement is greater in case of males than the females since amidst the former there is a large number of bachelors or widowers who can best promote their object of securing wives by appearing of a younger age while the latter who are generally married do not stand to gain much by the lie.

562 5. The tendency so marked amongst the Western women to understate their age, does not find much favour among the Indian women who on account of social restrictions such as *Purdah* system etc., have little chance to move out in society and consequently feel little temptation towards understatement.

888 6. The tendency to materially exaggerate their age amongst the old people is very common in India and any old man after he has crossed eighty is apt to declare himself a centenarian, and it is not unoften that to inspire belief in others he relates old incidents which he proudly states as having occurred and been seen by him when he was a boy.

805 562 7. Another element of error is introduced by the fact that the enumerator has to make enquiries from the head of the family who has to answer questions not only for himself but also for dependent residents. He might remember with somewhat exactness the ages of his sons but the ages of women who observe *purdah* can only be roughly declared by him and it should be no surprise if sometimes the error of 5 years or even a decade creeps in.

659 The inaccuracies due to the above factors were partly guarded against by previous training of the enumerators and the vigilance of the checking staff, and partly by adjustment effected in the statistics by subjecting the crude figures

According to the above method the mean ages for the whole State as well as for the provinces work out as shown in the marginal statement from which it will be observed that there has been a depletion in the mean ages since the last decade, which shows that the decade has been favourable to the birth and growth of children whose preponderance has reduced the mean age. The smoothening of the age-groups at the current Census has also played some part in bringing about the disparity in the figures of the two Censuses. The absence of Influenza epidemic and the infrequent visitations of other epidemics and that too in a mild form are greatly responsible for these results. The results of mean age by religion are given in the Subsidiary Table I to this chapter and the following extract will show the principal tendencies of the age statistics for the religions in the State.

District or Province.	Males		Females	
	1931	1921	1931	1921
State ..	29·9	25	29·95	24
Jammu Province ..	24·85	23	24·9	25
Kashmir ..	29·9	24	29·9	23
Frontier Districts ..	29·2	28	29·95	27

Religion and Sex.		1931	1921	1911
Hindu ..	Males	29·9	26	27
	Females	29·2	27	26
Muslim ..	Males	29·8	26	24
	Females	29·8	24	22
Sikh ..	Males	29·9	25	24
	Females	21·95	23	23
Budhist ..	Males	29·9	21	20
	Females	29·4	22	20

The above shows that the mean age is the highest for the Budhists and lowest in the case of Sikhs and Muslims who show a close correspondence, the Hindus occupying the middle position which leads to the conclusion that the Budhists do not constitute a growing population and the proportion of children amongst them is the lowest as compared to the Sikhs and Muslims, the growing nature of whose population is strongly corroborated by smaller mean age and consequently greater proportion of children in the earlier age-groups. The Subsidiary Table II substantiates the above conclusions as at a glance it will appear that the proportion of male children per 10,000 of each sex in the 0-5 group is 1,756 for Sikhs, 1,552 for Muslims, 1,316 for Hindus and only 1,085 for the Budhists. The non-progressive character of Budhist population is also abundantly brought to light by the application of Sundburg theory as will be presently shown.

121. Longevity.—The ages of the population in the Imperial Tables VII and VIII as also in the Subsidiary Tables are generally exhibited by quinary groups but after the group 65-70 instead of having further quinary groups such as 70-75, 75-80 the general practice is to include all the ages above 70 into one group designated as '70 and over' and consequently the statistics of longevity which do not find a place in the prescribed tables, are shown in Subsidiary Table VII at the end of this chapter. The figures show that there are 40,119 persons of ages above 70. The maximum age record of the current Census is 155 at which age 3 persons have been recorded (all in the Jammu Province) but this seems to be much exaggerated statement which only proves the abnormal tendency amongst the old people who have weak memories to inflate their ages by shooting as high as possible. Every old man after 80 is prone to declare himself as a centenarian and those nearing hundred would not content with a lesser figure than 120 or 125, and those above 100 can inflate their ages as much as they like to win the sympathy and reverence of the multitude. In fact such

165 persons are often-times bereft of senses of hearing and speech and the age is declared by other people who generally place it at a much higher figure than they have heard the man declaring himself. The figures in the table are therefore to be accepted with great reserve. Of the total number of persons above 70, 9,784 are Hindus, 28,732 Muslims, 998 Budhists and 575 Sikhs. The tendency for a preference for the numbers ending in zero or 5 is remarkably visible from the longevity table where the number of persons returned under ages 75, 80, 85, 90, 95, 100, 110, 120 and 125 are much higher than of those against the intervening ages. The total number of those aged 99 years is only 64 while the number of those aged exact 100 is 1,035 *i. e.*, 10 times greater, which shows the strong aspiration of the old to score their century.

162 **122. Sundburg Types of Population.**—In his address before the International Institute in 1899, the Sweedish Statistician Sundburg propounded his well-known theory as to the balance of population at different age-groups. According to him the number of persons aged 15-50 is generally about half of the total population, and the fluctuations usually take place in the higher or lower age-groups *i. e.*, 0-15 and 50 and over. The changes take place in the constitutions of the young people below 15 and amongst the old *i. e.*, above 50, while the middle-aged group between 15 and 50 contains the usual half of the total number. Applying his theory to the State the conclusion that it substantially holds good is self-evident as by the simple process of addition of age-groups 1 and 3 we get 1,811,509 which closely approximates to 1,834,736 of group 15-50 which contains about one-half of the population.

Age-group.		Population.
1. Age-group 0—15	..	1,473,680
2. „ 15—50	..	1,834,736
3. „ 50 and over	..	338,889

Further the population is classed (*a*) Progressive, if the 0-15 group contains about 40 per cent. (*b*) Stationary, if it contains about 33 per cent. and (*c*) Regressive, if it has about 20 per cent. In the case of this State the 0-15 group contains 40·5 per cent. of the population which clearly proves that our population is fairly progressive. The marginal statement exhibits the effects of the extension of this theory to the provinces from which it is obvious that in all the three units the age-group 15-50 contains approximately half of the total population of the province concerned, although resemblance is not as close as in the case of the whole State. The Frontier Districts show a very great approach to 50 per cent. while divergence is slightly greater in the case of the two provinces Jammu and Kashmir. Still the population under group 15-50 does not exceed the half by more than 3 or 4 per cent. which is too small a deviation to refute the theory enunciated above.

Province.	Age-groups.		
	0—15	15—50	50 & over.
Jammu Province ..	722,889	921,668	184,470
Kashmir „ ..	644,040	813,991	112,187
Frontier Districts ..	111,641	140,743	28,909

On the basis of this theory the stationary character of the Budhist population in the State can easily be established. The total population of the Budhists in the State is 38,724 of which group 0-15 contains 12,161 *i. e.*, 31 per cent., group 15-50 contains 19,386 almost exact 50 per cent. and group 50 and over, containing the balance. The presence of 50 per cent. in 15-50 proves the Sundburg's main theory while the proportion of 31 per cent. in the 0-15 age-group brings the population under the category of stationary and at the same time shows the regressive tendency; because for the category of stationary population 0-15 age-group should contain 33 per cent. of the population while in the present case the percentage is somewhat lower being only 31 per cent.

659 **123. Birth and Death-rates.**—As already observed in the first chapter the vital statistics of the State possess very doubtful reliability and consequently no attempt has been made to work up birth and death-rates therefrom on